

Sheridan is author of Labour's misery

Continued from Page 1

overall recording a drop in their majority from 59 to 54.

State of the parties in Glasgow is now Labour 54; Conservative 5 (up one); SNP 2 (up one); Liberal-Democrats 1 (down one), Others 4 (up four).

There was a huge roar in the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre when the Pollok result was announced.

Scores of Sheridan fans joined his mother Alice in celebrating the result with a rendition of "We'll keep the Red Flag Flying," and "Nice One, Tommy". The result follows Mr Sheridan's General Election "success", when he took more than 6000 votes in the Labour-held Pollok constituency.

Mrs Sheridan, who celebrated her 54th birthday on Wednesday, clutched a framed photograph of her son as she spoke about the result which had everyone talking.

"The people of Pollok have put their faith and their trust in the integrity and decency of Tommy and they are clearly prepared to struggle for a better future for their

children with Tommy as their leader."

Mrs Sheridan, who was almost overcome with emotion and was often drowned out by the celebrations behind her, continued: "Tommy will be continuing, as a councillor, to address the inhumane living conditions of the people of Pollok and he will not sell working people down the river — they know that."

Mr Sheridan's election agent Keith Baldassara added "this is a complete vindication of the years of work Tommy has done in defending people, particularly in the struggle against the Poll Tax."

Conservatives were quickly into celebration mood last night with a triumph over the SNP in Shawlands.

This was the party's first gain for 15 years in the city, according to victorious candidate Iain Thomas, who declared: "We are on the way back. I am absolutely stunned."

The Tories gain in Shawlands was, however, turned on its head in nearby Pollokshields. Labour's new candidate Mohammed Sarwar had a 394 majority over Mr Jack Richmond, a former Conservative leader.

Sadly, early results in Glasgow pointed to widespread apathy among city electors with a average turnout looking like a disappointing 30%.

Glasgow's former lord provost, Susan Baird, held Parkhead with a thumping majority of 948.

It was almost three times that of the second-placed SNP candidate Alan Cairey in a turnout of just 25%.

Labour group secretary Patricia Chalmers held her Partick seat with more than double the vote of the SNP candidate James Beers.

Militant's breakthrough in seats with huge Labour majorities is certain to result in very lively council meetings.

Meanwhile, telephone canvassing failed to keep the Conservatives in control of Bearsden and Milngavie District. A surge by the Liberal Democrats saw them gain two seats and leave the Glasgow suburb with a hung council.

However, the Tories remain the largest single party with five seats, the Liberal Democrats now hold four and Labour one.

Labour councillor Des McGarry now finds him-

self the most popular man in the district and said that he expects the Liberal Democrats to be in touch before the council meets for the first time a week today.

Eastwood district proved to be a steadfast bulwark for the Tory Party in Scotland with eight Conservative councillors being returned with sizeable majorities.

Despite concern over the potential political damage of the Pilmuir Quarry controversy exposed and planning convener Ian Hutchison substantially increased his vote over the colourful Lib-Dem candidate Ella Rae.

Contrary to gloomy prognostications, Labour solo representative Jim Fletcher held onto Thornliebank.

East Kilbride deputy provost Edward McKenna lost his Hairmyres seat to the Scottish National Party.

Labour lost two seats overall to SNP.

Clydebank Provost David Grainger lost his Old Kilpatrick seat after a dramatic swing towards his Independent opponent, Billy Kemp.

The Conservative Party made sizeable gains in Strathkelvin largely at

the expense of the Labour Party.

However the Conservatives success in six wards, an increase of four from the previous election, fell short of their bid to oust the controlling Labour administration who will now form a new council with a majority of three.

The most notable scalp claimed by the Conservatives was that of Labour group leader Andy Cochrane, who saw his 250 majority overhauled by the Conservative candidate Ian Young.

There was also an upset in the Woodhead ward where the sitting Labour councillor James Barker was beaten by the Conservative choice Edith Hogg.

Labour held onto control of Renfrew District Council by only one seat.

The state of the council is now Labour 23, SNP 12, Conservative 8, SLD 2.

Labour's majority of 17 was cut to one when SNP gained seven Labour seats and the Conservatives gained two from Labour.

The Labour group meets on Sunday to pick a new provost following the retiral of Provost George Murray who did not stand for re-election.

Daily Record

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YOUR PAPER - MADE IN SCOTLAND

27p

**Labour take
a tanking . .
Poll Tax rebel
Sheridan is in**



CELL-BRATION . . . Tommy Sheridan

JAILHOUSE SHOCK!

By DEREK MASTERTON

JAILED poll tax rebel Tommy Sheridan last night swept to victory as Scotland's first Scottish Militant Labour councillor.

The prisoner in Saughton Jail in Edinburgh snatched Glasgow Pollok from the Labour Party with a majority of 447.

In the 1988 district elections Labour had romped home with a 3055 majority over the SNP.

"Labour's Shadow Scottish Secretary Donald Dewar commented: "I don't think it's of great political significance."

But it was a sad night for Labour in many other areas, mainly due to rock-bottom turnouts in their traditional heartlands.

With 25 results in, they looked set to lose control of Edinburgh.

They had 15 seats with the Tories on six, SLD three and SNP two.

In a major shock, they lost Kyle and Carrick to the Tories.

And they lost their grip on West Lothian for the first time in 12 years.

Labour also lost Kilmarnock and Falkirk, but held Dundee.

And in Aberdeen they managed a majority of two to take control.

Victory

Sheridan, jailed for six months in March for defying a court order banning him from interfering in a poll tax warrant sale, was jubilant.

Speaking from his cell, he said: "It's a victory for working class socialism."

And he demanded an early release from his sentence, not due to end until July 1.

He said: "I am now an elected councillor and shouldn't be here."

Sheridan fought the Glasgow Pollok seat in last month's General Election and won more than 6000 votes, finishing second to Labour.

Labour lost six seats in Glasgow, including another - south Nitshill - to Militant Labour, but stayed in charge.

And the Tories lost Bearsden and Milngavie to no overall control.

RESULTS

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EVENING
Times

LET GLASGOW FLOURISH

PLACE
THE BALL
JACKPOT

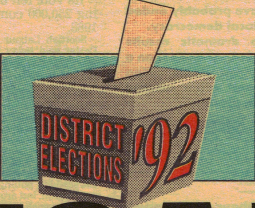
£60,000

PAGE 18

M15 to
lead
war on
terror
bomb
teams

POLL VICTOR SHERIDAN HITS OUT

I'M A
POLITICAL
PRISONER



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By IAN HERNON
BRITAIN'S spymasters are to take charge of the war against Ulster terror squads.
Home Secretary Ken Clarke announced today that the "lead responsibility" for intelligence work against Irish republican terrorism should pass from the Metropolitan Police Special Branch to MI5.
The move follows an internal inquiry and was demanded by new woman MI5 boss Stella Rimington.
In an unprecedented move she issued a brief press statement welcoming the decision aimed at beating the bombers on mainland Britain.

SKILLS
She said: "We look forward to strengthening still further our already close co-operation with the police service and combining our skills even more effectively with theirs to help them bring terrorists to justice."
But the change was bitterly opposed by Special Branch chiefs.
Up until now they have taken the lead in acquiring, processing and using intelligence against Irish terrorists.

The security services already have control over intelligence work against other forms of terrorism including Loyalists and international squads.
Mr Clarke said: "The purpose of this change is to enable the security service to use to the full the skills and expertise which have developed over the years in their work on counter terrorism."
He emphasised that special branch will continue to play an "indispensable part" and the collection of evidence, arrest and prosecution of terrorist suspects will still be a police matter.
The review of anti-terror measures was given impetus by the recent spate of London bombings, including last year's mortar bomb attack on Downing Street.



JAILHOUSE COUNCILLOR: Tommy Sheridan

VICTORIOUS Militant Tommy Sheridan today demanded his freedom.
Hours after his sensational local election win in Glasgow Pollco, he declared: "I am now a political prisoner".
Councillor Sheridan, as he will be known, claimed he should be freed from Edinburgh's Saughton Prison BEFORE his scheduled release date of July 1.
In a message to the people of Glasgow he pledged to:
● Become a thorn in the side of the city's Labour administration.
● End what he described as Labour leader Pat Lally's "Stalinist" regime.
Sheridan's victory was one of many Labour losses in a night of gloom for the party.
Speaking from his prison cell this morning, Sheridan said he would be demanding improved facilities.
"I will be speaking to the authorities to get the use of facilities to deal with my constituents' problems."
LINK
"The plan was to move me out of the Training For Freedom Centre where I am currently held and back into a remand hall."
"However, I would have no access to telephone facilities or my agent."
It is expected Sheridan's Militant Labour party will

RISE OF COUNCILLOR
TOM
PAGE 4

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RISE AND RISE OF COUNCILLOR TOM

By RON McKENNA

LAST night's shock election result is the latest development in the rise and rise of Tommy Sheridan.

Councillor Sheridan, as he will now be known, first emerged in 1988.

At that time he announced that Militant would rise in Glasgow on the back of opposition to the Poll Tax.

The articulate 24-year-old politics graduate was then an active Labour member in the Pollok constituency.

He sparked a major uproar by actively challenging sitting MP Jimmy Dunnachie from within the party.

EXPULSION

He worried Labour activists with his articulate speech and his astute performances on television.

His challenge ultimately spelled his expulsion from the Labour Party in a highly publicised series of disciplinary hearings.

These involved several flying visits from top Labour officials drafted to sort out the Militant infiltration crisis in the city.

He was expelled along with many supporters amid bitter scenes which ended with Sheridan's North Pollok branch being closed down.

At this point the controversy attracted national attention and he became a high profile political figure.

PROTESTS

Sheridan capitalised on that, becoming the leader of the Anti-Poll Tax Federations across Britain - at his peak jetting between London and Glasgow to lead mass demonstrations.

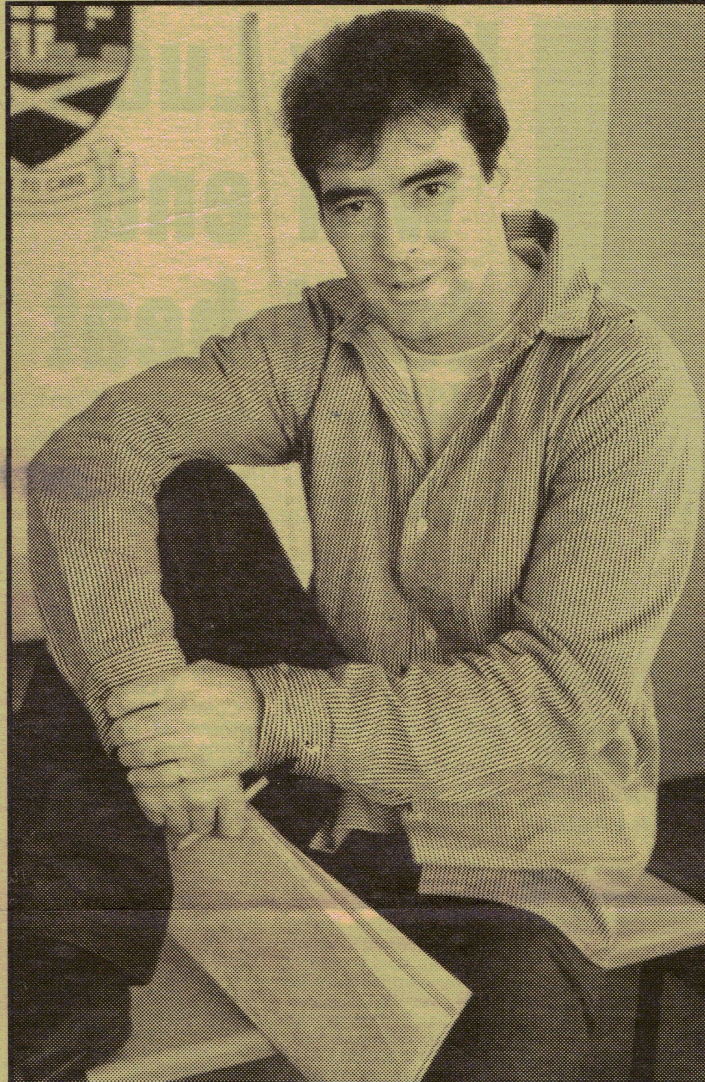
During the past three years Sheridan has led protests and demonstrations in and around Glasgow to stop sheriff officers entering homes of what he claimed were "ordinary working people".

It is his clashes with these offi-

The two faces of victory

PROUD mum Alice Sheridan holds up a picture of her son Tommy, whose victory from a prison cell stunned the political pundits and gave Scotland its first Militant councillor.

Picture: JOHN McCARROLL



PRISON CAMPAIGN. . . Tommy Sheridan, the poll tax rebel.

cials which lead to his jailing earlier this year for contempt of Court.

Sheridan and a large number of supporters clashed with police at the first warrant sale to be held in the city.

The sale had to be cancelled at the advice of police and region officials who feared for the safety of staff.

FREEDOM

At the peak of the demonstration Sheridan was seen by millions on TV tearing up an interdict banning him from interfering with the event.

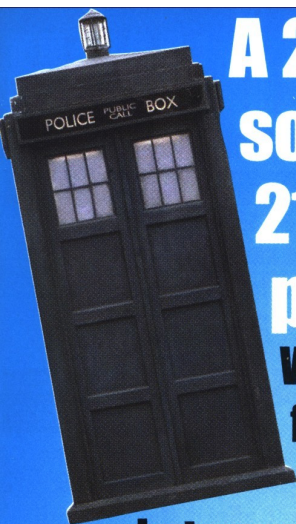
That cost him six months' free-

dom when he became one of Scotland's few civil prisoners.

Last night's stunning victory came a month after he polled almost 6,000 votes in the General Election to come second to Mr Dunnachie.

Scottish Militant Labour made full capital of his prisoner status, holding press conferences in jail and giving journalists the rare opportunity of being able to phone up a prisoner "inside" for instant comments.

Politics in Glasgow District Council will certainly be more lively with Councillor Sheridan on board.



A 21st century solution to a 21st century problem

We can't promise you free travel through time and space -

but we can promise you free nationwide bus, rail and ferry travel

WHY?

Because we have to halt global warming, slash congestion and cut road deaths.

WHEN?

Within three years - starting with public ownership of our buses and trains. Services would then be expanded - and fares abolished.

HOW?

Not by hammering motorists with tolls and taxes - but by enticing drivers to leave the car at home by making public transport free. For the past 10 years fare-free transport has been a roaring success in the Belgian city of Hasselt.

HOW MUCH?

£1 billion a year - just a quarter of the combined costs of congestion, road accidents and road repairs.

Free public transport
An idea whose time has come

Re-elect Rosie Kane

Rosie Kane, the SSP's number one candidate on the Glasgow list, is one of Scotland's most popular and dynamic MSPs.

In four years as an MSP, Rosie has dealt with thousands of individual cases, from Council Tax debt to overcrowding, from dawn raids to anti-social behaviour.

In Glasgow she has backed campaigns against school and hospital closures, and in support of low paid workers.

Nationally, she has fought for free school meals and free prescription charges.

She is also well known for her principled stance against the Iraq war and the waste of public money on Trident nuclear weapons.

Rosie was a founder member of the campaign to stop the M74. As Rosie points out, the

Email any questions you'd like to ask Rosie to rosie.ssp@hotmail.com

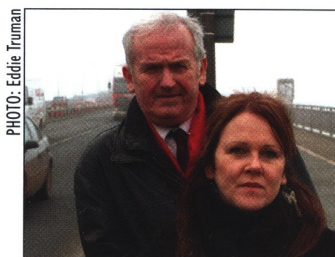


PHOTO: Eddie Truman

ON THE ROAD: campaigning with respected ex-Labour minister John McAllion, who is now an SSP candidate. Rosie is spearheading the SSP's free public transport campaign

colossal £500 million cost of this short stretch of motorway could provide free bus travel in Glasgow for the next ten years.

Number 2 on the list is Jim McVicar - an ex-Labour councillor from Baillieston who was expelled from the Labour Party in the 1990s because he refused to co-operate with the hated Poll Tax.

The SSP has no peerages for sale. Nor is the party bankrolled by billionaires. To fight this election, we rely on the support of ordinary people. If you can donate to our election campaign fund, or if you can help our election campaign in any other way, or would like any more information about our election campaign please get in touch. Phone 0131 668 4800 or text your name and contact details to 07805 271 442 email scottishsocialistparty@btconnect.com or fill in the form below and return to Scottish Socialist Party, 70 Stanley St, Glasgow G41 1JB

- ☐ I would like to help the SSP's election campaign
☐ I am donating £..... to the SSP's election fund (make cheques payable to 'SSP Election Fund')
☐ I would like more information on the SSP's election campaign/policies

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www.scottishsocialistparty.org

P&P Scottish Socialist Party, 70 Stanley Street, Glasgow G41 1JB

ELECTION COMMUNICATION

Scottish Socialist Party

GLASGOW REGION



PHOTO: Craig MacLean

FREEDOM: Rosie speaks out at a rally for Scottish independence

Let's transform Scotland

After a year of turmoil, the Scottish Socialist Party is back on track to win a list seat in every region of Scotland - and possibly TWO seats in Glasgow, where Rosie Kane could be joined by Jim McVicar.

With a hung parliament on the cards, a team of Scottish Socialist MSPs could even hold the balance of power.

For many people, politics conjures up images of sleaze, corruption, greed and lies.

But even political opponents respect the Scottish Socialist Party for its integrity and honesty.

You may not agree with everything the SSP says. But

most people would agree that that SSP is a straight-talking party that you can trust.

If you want celebrity superstars, read a glossy magazine.

But if you want hard-hitting policies to improve the lives of millions of Scots, vote for a serious socialist party.

The SSP is Scotland's most consistent anti-war party.

It is Scotland's most strongly pro-independence party.

It is Scotland's anti-poverty and pro-equality party.

Let's start to transform Scotland. Go on - mark your X beside the Scottish Socialist Party on May 3.

HE WHO PAYS THE PIPER CALLS THE TUNE



Big business and the rich have poured millions into the bank accounts of the four big parties.

For the fatcats, this isn't charity. It's an investment. They expect rewards in return.

The Scottish Socialists stand on the side of the millions against the millionaires.

The SSP is the only party which insists its MSPs live on no more than the average wage of a skilled worker - £25,000 a year.

Too many politicians are tone deaf to the problems of ordinary working people.

They're too busy dancing to the music of the rich.

DID YOU KNOW?

? Scotland's top two banks last year piled up record profits totalling £15 billion. Since New Labour took power, their profits have risen one thousand per cent. If the basic pension had risen at the same rate, it would now be worth £600 a week.

? Brian Souter, the SNP's latest donor, last year paid himself £98 million in salary and bonuses. A worker on the average wage would have to work for 4000 years to earn that amount.

? Scotland's share of the bloated UK defence budget is an astronomical £3 billion. If an independent Scotland slashed military spending per head to the same level as the Republic of Ireland, we would have an extra £2.5 billion - or almost £1000 for every household.

What the SSP can do for you

ARE YOU:

A COUNCIL TAX PAYER?

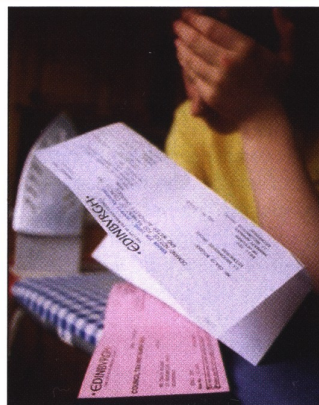
For seven years, the SSP has led the fight against the Council Tax. Last year, an SSP bill to scrap the tax was voted down by Labour, the SNP, the Tories and the Lib Dems. But we will keep up the pressure to axe the tax.

A PENSIONER?

The SSP wants a £160-a-week state pension, linked to earnings. In the meantime we will campaign to abolish rents for pensioners in social and sheltered housing, and for free fuel for pensioners from October to April.



NUTRITION BOMB: Scotland's share of Trident's replacement could fund free school meals for 100 years!



'AW NAW...' the SSP will replace the dreaded Council Tax with a fair tax based on income. Four out of five households will be better off

PHOTO: Craig MacLean

A PARENT?

The SSP's Free School Meals Bill has attracted mass support, not just from parents, and teachers, but also from a vast range of health experts and children's charities.

All four big parties oppose universal free school meals. But a strong vote for the SSP could force them to change their minds.

A LOW PAID WORKER?

The SSP wants an £8-an-hour minimum wage for all workers. The SSP will fight for Holyrood to use its power to banish low pay from Scotland.

A STUDENT?

The SSP fights for free education and an end to all fees. We also want to restore student grants back to the same level as those enjoyed by government ministers when they attended university in the 1970s and 1980s.

A WORKING WOMAN?

The SSP has been at the frontline of the fight against sex discrimination in the workplace. We will campaign for equal pay for women, with wages levelled up instead of down.

UNDER 21?

The SSP will campaign for the same minimum wage rate for all workers, irrespective of age.

A TENANT OR STAYING WITH YOUR PARENTS?

The property boom has bypassed millions who can't afford the sky-high cost of private housing. The SSP will stand up for tenants, and young people forced to stay at home with their parents. We will bring a bill before Holyrood to build 100,000 affordable homes for rent.

Regional Members		Vote once only (X)
Liberal Democrats		
Scottish Conservative & Unionist Party		
Scottish Green Party		
Scottish Labour Party		
Scottish National Party		
Scottish Socialist Party		X
Other		
Other		

Constituency Member		Vote once only (X)
Alex Kipper		
Jack McConnem		
Annabel Tweedie		
Nicol Wotsiname		

What you can do for the SSP

- 1 On May 3rd, take 15 minutes to go to your local polling station.
- 2 Get your voting papers at the desk and mark an X beside SSP on the LEFT side of the Holyrood ballot.
- 3 Spread the word - vote on the LEFT for the left-wing SSP.



Re-elect Tommy Sheridan

Tommy Sheridan is the lead candidate for Solidarity in Glasgow

Tommy has served the people of Glasgow in the Scottish parliament over the last 8 years. He has fought tirelessly against poverty, low pay, inequality and war. **Tommy has introduced more Bills than any of the other 128 MSPs.** His bill to abolish Warrant Sales was passed. He also put forward Bills on free school meals, to abolish the council tax and replace it with an income based alternative, to take the railways back into public ownership, and now to ban the public sale of airguns.

Tommy Sheridan has lived on the average wage of a skilled worker in Scotland over the last eight years, not the £52,000 a year the rest of the MSPs have taken home.

Tommy Sheridan has been an outstanding fighter for working class communities in Glasgow. He has stood up to the rich and the powerful and continues to fight injustice, low pay, poverty and war. Re-elect Tommy to represent you and Glasgow in the parliament.

Vote **Solidarity - Tommy Sheridan**

For more information about our policies
Phone 0800 0431917

Email info@solidarityscotland.org
www.solidarityscotland.org

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end the low pay scandal, no to war and trident, scrap the council tax, stop privatisation, for public ownership and an independent socialist Scotland

vote

SOLIDARITY

Tommy Sheridan

ON THE LEFT HAND SIDE OF YOUR BALLOT PAPER (regional members)

Election Communication - Glasgow

SOLIDARITY

SCOTLAND'S SOCIALIST MOVEMENT



A message from Solidarity MSP Tommy Sheridan

"Solidarity is the new socialist party set up by myself and Rosemary Byrne in the aftermath of our battle against the lies of the anti-trade union and reactionary News of the World."

Solidarity is a pro-workers party. We are on the side of trade unions, better employment protec-

tion, secure jobs and a decent minimum wage.

Solidarity is against war and nuclear weapons. We want UK troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan, Trident cancelled and billions set aside for new homes for rent, the NHS, and pensions.

Solidarity is against racism. We want to welcome those fleeing persecution, war and poverty not lock them up or forcibly remove them through dawn raids.

Solidarity is for independence and socialism. An independent, tolerant, nuclear free socialist Scotland that puts people before profit and ends the low pay and poverty scandal.

Solidarity is only standing in the regional party list which is on the left hand side of the ballot paper on May 3rd. To elect Tommy Sheridan and a team of socialist MSPs across Scotland:

Vote Solidarity - Tommy Sheridan

7 reasons to vote for *Solidarity* on May 3rd

Working class people and their families need a group of **Solidarity MSPs**, led by Tommy Sheridan and Rosemary Byrne, to fight for radical socialist and environmentally just policies both inside and outside parliament.



1 **SCRAP THE COUNCIL TAX**

Despite the rhetoric from the other parties only one MSP has introduced a bill to scrap the council tax and replace it with a fairer income based alternative - Tommy Sheridan. Tommy and Solidarity want to tax the millionaires more and pensioners and ordinary workers less. We will introduce a bill that would leave 77% of Scots better off and would also raise £300 million more for local services.

Vote Solidarity to scrap the council tax.

2 **FREE SCHOOL MEALS FOR ALL**

The first MSP to raise the issue of free, and nutritious school meals for all school pupils was Tommy Sheridan in a 2001 Members Bill. We will continue to campaign for this radical pro-health and anti-poverty measure.

Vote Solidarity for free and healthy school meals

3 **PUBLIC OWNERSHIP, PUBLIC SERVICES NOT PRIVATISATION**

In conjunction with the railworkers union, the RMT, Tommy Sheridan introduced a bill in parliament to take back our railways from the hands of the private profiteers and back into

public ownership. Solidarity believes that all essential services and industries should be publicly owned and democratically run.

Vote Solidarity for public ownership, public services and against privatisation and PFI.



4 **NO TO WAR AND TRIDENT**

Solidarity members and our MSPs Tommy Sheridan and Rosemary Byrne have been to the forefront of all the anti-war and anti-Trident protests over the last eight years. We stand for the withdrawal of UK troops from Iraq and Afghanistan and the end of nuclear weapons. We want billions spent on better pensions, a higher minimum wage and a living grant for students, not squandered on war and Weapons of Mass Destruction.

Vote Solidarity if you are against war and nuclear weapons.

5 **INDEPENDENCE AND SOCIALISM**

Solidarity is for an independent and a socialist Scotland. A country that harnesses our vast oil, gas, electricity, manufacturing and financial resources for the majority, not the

benefit of the few. No pensioner or child should live in poverty in a country as rich as ours.

Vote Solidarity for an independent, nuclear free and socialist Scotland.

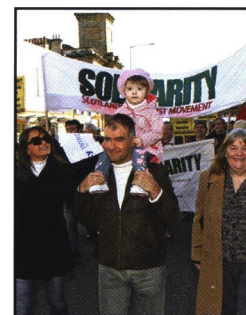
6 **BAN THE SALE OF AIRGUNS**

Tommy Sheridan has introduced a bill to ban the sale of airguns. 82% of Scots say they support this proposal as does the Fire Brigades Union and the SSPCA. Solidarity will turn this proposal into a bill to ban the public sale of airguns.

Vote Solidarity to rid Scotland of the scourge of airguns.

7 **FOR WORKERS AND TRADE UNION RIGHTS**

Solidarity is a pro-trade union and pro-workers party. We believe that workers create the wealth in society and deserve rights and dignity at work. We support a Trade Union Freedom Bill that would



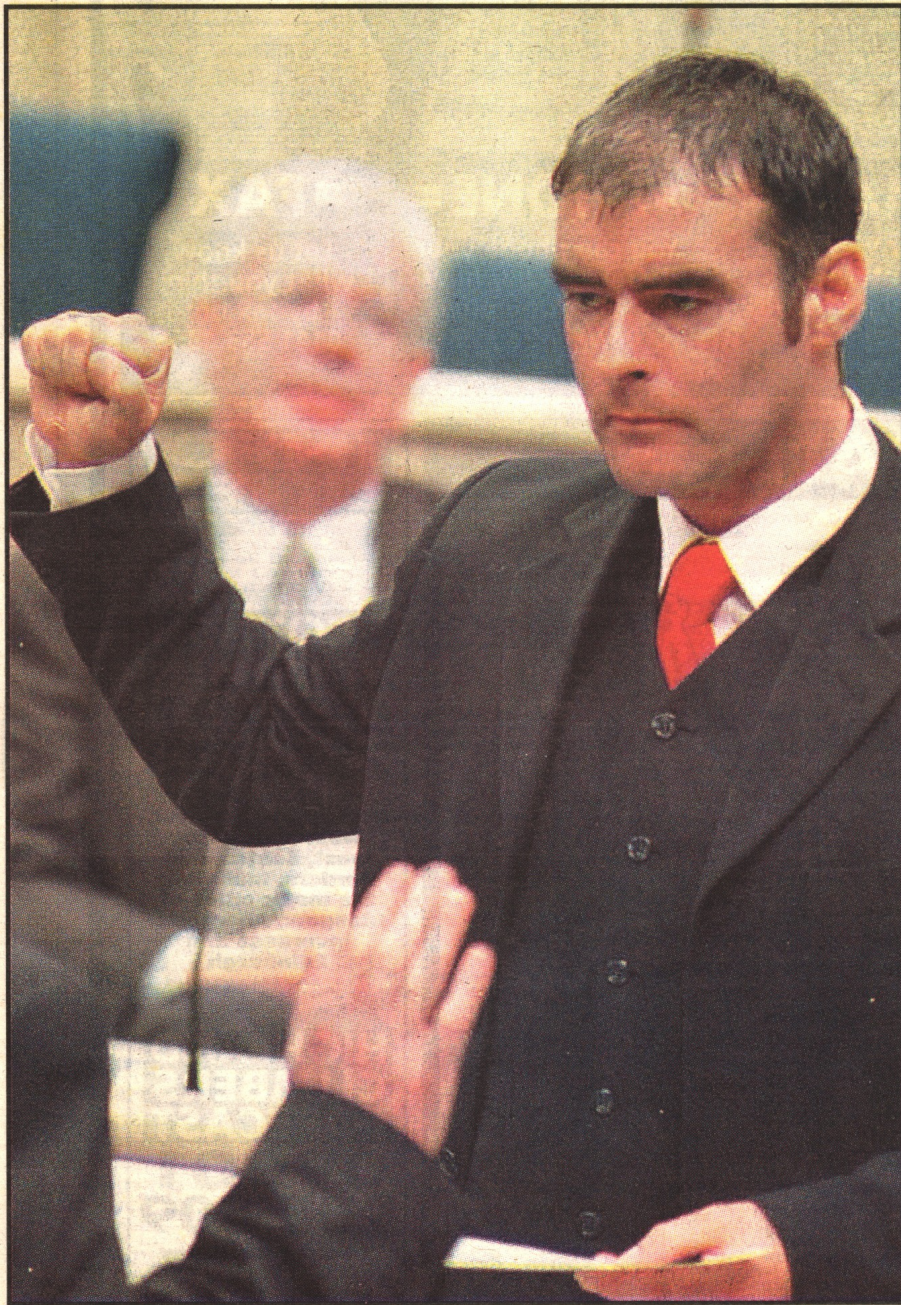
end the vicious anti-trade union laws of Thatcher and New Labour.

Vote Solidarity for trade union and workers' rights.

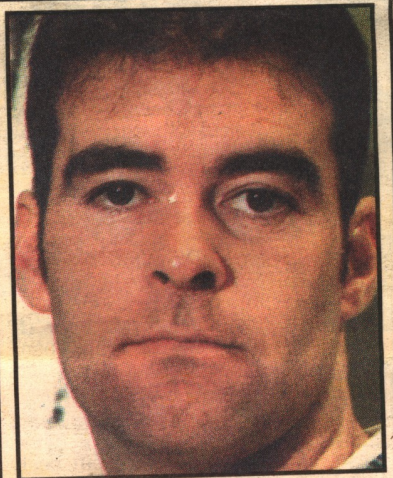
Solidarity set for 7 MSPs

The only independent opinion poll to mention that Solidarity is led by Tommy Sheridan and Rosemary Byrne showed 7% of people were either very likely or quite likely to vote for Solidarity on May 3rd. ***That level of support would result in 7 Solidarity MSPs being elected.*** The poll was carried out in January by System 3 and our support has grown since then - but every vote counts. ***Vote Solidarity - Tommy Sheridan to re-elect Tommy Sheridan and Rosemary Byrne and a team of socialist MSPs across Scotland.***

CALL-OFFS – FOR A B



PEOPLE POWER ... Tommy Sheridan will mark memorial hall opening



TOMMY SHERIDAN . . . warrant

Sheridan held in dawn swoop

By IAIN DUFF

POLL tax rebel Tommy Sheridan was arrested today in a dawn swoop at his Glasgow home.

A warrant was issued for the arrest of the Militant politician in connection with alleged non-payment of fines.

Sheridan (31) was arrested today at his home in Pollok along with fellow campaigner Keith Baldassara.

The pair are alleged to have failed to pay fines relating to their activities as high-profile campaigners against the Community Charge.

The two were expected to appear at Glasgow Sheriff Court today.

Glasgow city councillor Sheridan was one of the leading figures in the campaign for mass non-payment of the tax.

His 57-year-old mother Alice has previously been jailed for refusing to pay fines.

COME ON YOU REDS

BALL TO PLAY FOR ... Tommy loves to take his mind off the pressure of politics on a Saturday by turning his full attention to football and East Kilbride Thistle

BATTLE ... Tommy Sheridan show his fighting spirit in a football arena rather than a political one. The leader of the Scottish Socialist Party was playing for junior team East Kilbride Thistle against Stonehouse Violet Pictures: JEFF SMITH



By SHEILA HAMILTON

THE RAIN was horizontal. The cold chilled your bones. The pitch was a churned-up porridge of mud and the players might have done better with flippers than boots.

But the stocky figure in the once white top with the just decipherable Number Six on his back was having the time of his life.

Which goes to prove – as many of his opponents suspected – that Tommy Sheridan is quite mad.

Many of those opponents would give much to see the leader of Scotland's newest political party, the Scottish Socialist Party, come a cropper. For their

information, they can see Tommy falling on his face every Saturday afternoon, away games excepted, at East Kilbride Thistle Juniors' football ground at Show Park.

For, Tommy Sheridan, militant Glasgow councillor for Pollok, the devil incarnate, or Robin Hood style champion of the poor, rabble rouser or supremely nice guy, depending on your viewpoint, is Thistle's latest amateur signing.

Left-winger Tommy, who plays midfield, has always been a champion of the underdog.

In its heyday, says president and former manager Willie Egan, it could command a crowd of 600.

THEIR goal is promotion to the first division this year and they have high hopes of Tommy.

Maybe they could build

Soccer-mad Sheridan is a real left winger



him up into some kind of star with his bronzed good looks – the sun must shine on Pollok more than it does on the rest of us.

For a politician, Tommy looks good. He doesn't drink or smoke and the gym work-outs and training sessions have paid off.

"I don't weigh myself," he says off-handedly. "I look down at my tummy and if it's too big, I know I'm too heavy."

What John, who played for Airdrie and East Kilbride, saw in Tommy, the brother-in-law of his ex-

assistant manager, was a good, industrious player.

"Tommy is quite competitive," said John with a grin. "He's in there."

"I'm not the silkiest player," admits Tommy, "and John knows I'm not the most skilful, but I'll give one hundred per cent."

"I'm 34, old for a footballer. Someone said how many years have you left and I said it's probably better to count the months."

SO the truth is out. Football is the Pollok firebrand's other great

passion. He had a better start than most.

His dad, also Tommy, was president of Pollok United Football Team and Tommy played with them from the ages of eight to 17.

It was a team which produced professionals like his pal, Billy Davies, Motherwell FC's manager, Dave McPherson, of Hearts, and Tommy Coyne, of Dundee.

As a lad, Tommy, like most boys, wanted to be a professional footballer.

"It takes certain attributes, one of which is luck, but

I would say I've always been slow which has been a problem."

However, he allows himself a little boasting when he relates how he played for the team at Stirling University.

"They had never won the league and we won it for the first time the season I joined and won it for the next four years till I left."

He has also played with Larkhall Juniors when they reached two cup finals, getting beaten by Pollok Juniors.

HE plays for Benbu Rovers, Recreation

He'll play for Benbu Rovers, Recreation. Tommy, though, is more down to earth, wouldn't be playing for the team at Stirling University.

He will be a candidate for the Party's list in the next general election.

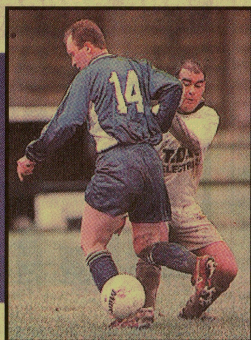
And the Party's list in the next general election. He will be a candidate for the Party's list in the next general election.



COUNTDOWN ... Tommy arrives at Show Park



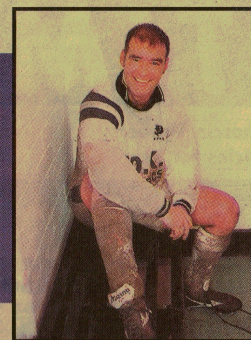
PASS MASTER ... in possession



CRUNCH ... Tommy gets a foot in



SHAKE ON IT ... it's a 2-1 win for EK Thistle over the Violets



BREATHER ... a well earned rest



TEAM PLAYER ... in more familiar pose



FIGHT INEQUALITY
tax the fat cats
SCRAP THE COUNCIL TAX

PUBLIC MEETING

Thurs 7th Sept

7.30 pm

Castlemilk Community Centre

speaker: **TOMMY SHERIDAN**

Scotland's obscene inequality is growing. Brian Souter, Scotland's richest fat-cat, has grabbed £565m in personal wealth - whilst pensioners, young workers, people on benefits, the low paid, students and 1 in 3 kids live in appalling poverty.

The taxation system makes the rich even richer, the poor even poorer.

The council tax means Brian Souter only pays £1,516 a year on his £1 million mansion - and Balmoral Castle only £1,438 - whilst families in run-down tenements scrimp and save to meet impossible council tax bills - for ever-worsening council services!

Join the DEMO. Demand the fat cats pay their share. Scrap the council tax - for a Scottish Service Tax based on income.

join the Scottish Socialist Party - ring 0141 221 7714

Waging war on wee Ally McBeals

On 23 November, the night of the Glasgow Anniesland by-election, BBC Scotland's *Election Special* programme perpetrated a grave injustice. Representatives of Scotland's four "major parties" were gathered in the studio. Exiled on a remote link was the tanned and pugnacious Tommy Sheridan MSP, the leader of the Trotskyite Scottish Socialist Party. Sheridan was indignant. Why, he demanded, was he restricted to occasional interjections when the Liberal Democrat was on the panel? What right had the BBC to depict his party as a minority player? Next time, he insisted, he should be in the studio alongside Labour, the SNP and the Tories. He then proceeded to taunt the First Minister with a relentless critique of Labour's refusal to participate in campaign hustings.

A visitor to Scotland would have found it hard to believe that Henry McLeish was the senior politician. Sheridan was quicker, wittier and better focused. McLeish was saved from humiliation by technology, rather than his own guile: because Sheridan was an external contributor, his microphone could be cut when he interrupted too often.

Sheridan cheated himself of his place in the studio after the cynical pre-Christmas contest in Falkirk West. While Labour scraped home on the lowest turnout in Scotland since universal suffrage, the SSP leader was in prison for refusing to pay a £250 fine imposed for his part in an anti-nuclear protest at Faslane. He milked the experience for every gram of publicity. "It does not surprise me that, in the season of goodwill to all men," said the professed atheist, "I am being sent to prison after standing up for a nuclear-free Scotland and a peaceful world."

Sheridan's clever mixture of cheap publicity and po-faced earnestness makes it easy for opponents to dismiss him as a figure of fun. Tom Brown did just that here in the *NS* last month. I have been guilty of it myself. Midway through Sheridan's sentence, I joked that he would portray this brief incarceration as the equivalent of Mao's long march or Karl Marx's early struggles with Prussian absolutism. Sure enough, before emerging from

Don't mock Tommy Sheridan's Scottish Socialist Party. It helps the poor get their stairwells cleaned and it could win 10 per cent of the Glasgow vote. By **Tim Luckhurst**



Attracting attention: Tommy Sheridan and his wife, Gail Healy

four days in Greenock prison, he had compiled a prison diary for a Sunday newspaper. It was cold at night, we learnt, but prison conditions had improved slightly since his previous sentence (for his poll tax protest). Eat your heart out, Antonio Gramsci.

Comrades on the outside did not let him down. We know (the diary again) that Sheridan's grim cell was much cheered by the news that the SSP had managed fourth place again in Falkirk West. His colleague Ian Hunter won 989 votes, or 5.07 per cent. Hugh O'Donnell of the Liberal Democrats lost his deposit with a humiliating 3.15 per cent.

The SSP has become a real force, at least in Scotland's battleground central belt. Sheridan's tireless campaign for "an independent, Socialist Scotland" can no longer be dismissed as an amusing diversion. The statistics prove it. In the 1999 Scottish elections to the Edinburgh parliament, his dedicated band of post-entryist Trots won 18,581 votes in the ten parliamentary constituencies that make up the Glasgow region. That was 7.25 per cent of the total. Labour's future coalition partners, the Liberal Democrats, got 7.21 per cent, a galling 108 fewer votes. Sheridan's tally in Glasgow Pollock, where his work as a councillor has made him a hero to many constituents, rose from 3,639 (11.09 per cent) at the 1997 general election to 5,611 (21.5 per cent) in 1999.

Since then, the SSP has gone from strength to strength in by-elections

where it might easily have been pushed aside in the contest between Labour and the SNP. In Anniesland, in 1999, the SSP's Rosie Kane pushed her Liberal Democrat opponent into fifth place.

This is not to say that decent, tax-fearing Blairites, with second homes on Mull and children at private schools, need fear vast redistribution and bloody revolt by their domestic staff. But they should pay attention, because in the sink estates and peripheral wastelands where "social inclusion" means sharing a packet of ten Embassy Regal, the SSP is building support. The party is doing it with the sort of community politics that new ► 35



"I lost my job, my wife, my kids . . . yep, I've got a lot to thank booze for"

► Labour may one day regret spurning.

Sheridan and his comrades are a product of new Labour's alienation from its heartlands – and they know it. The hatred between the SSP and new Labour is palpable. Rosie Kane, the SSP candidate in Anniesland, captured the spirit in a campaign interview. "I'd hoped to get to a hustings where I could sit on a platform alongside Bill Butler [Labour] so he could see what a real socialist looks like," she said. "I live every day with poverty. It's the politics of the bus stop. It's about the dirt and grime and tears of poverty. When Tony Blair came to power, 36 per cent of Glasgow kids qualified for free school meals. Now it's 44 per cent. Nothing has been done to lift people out of poverty."

To affluent political commentators and to the people whom Kane calls new Labour's "wee Ally McBeals with their perfect hair", the SSP's solutions to these problems look risible. Yet elsewhere, they are increasingly popular. It is not the commitments to nationalise Scotland's financial institutions, ban the bomb and divide housework equally between the sexes that make the SSP effective. Nor is it the party's commitment to community ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange. That's seen as so much bollocks in Pollock. Getting housing benefit claims sorted, arranging new tenancies, cleaning stairwells and organising repairs is not. Labour used to do it when it had grass-roots activists sufficiently motivated to care.

And now? Well, the SSP has spotted another flaw in Scottish Labour. The party is not reformed, modernised and Blairite – it just tries hard to look that way. The results of mixing unreformed Scottish Labour practices with new presentational techniques are grotesque. Labour MSPs

wander around in identical suits and shoes. They carry clipboards and set their phones to vibrate so as not to interrupt television interviews. They defer to the minder programmed to shepherd them. Labour MSPs and candidates must be the most uninspired, inarticulate clones Scottish politics has ever witnessed.

To excluded populations, vaguely nostalgic for the thunder and radicalism of conviction politics, these Labour machine politicians are indistinguishable from Tories. Scottish Socialists, in contrast, sound authentic. In the parts of Scotland that prosperity left behind, the SSP has credibility. There are lots of parts like that.

What does it amount to? A party perhaps capable of winning 5 per cent across the central belt, with 10 per cent in Glasgow? At best, that is probably the most Sheridan can hope for. But it is not a trivial prize. The Scottish Parliament is elected by a semi-proportional system. It is not hard to imagine circumstances in which the SSP can win two or three list seats at the next Scottish election.

And the message of all this? Labour's alienation from the excluded, the hard core of have-nots left behind by both Thatcher and Blair, has left a gap that fundamentalist socialism can still fill. In a country where Labour and the SNP already grapple for the mainstream, left-of-centre vote, this creates a new factor that could be as significant to Labour's Scottish prospects in a tight election as Ralph Nader's national profile was to Al Gore. All opinion poll evidence suggests that the next race for the Scottish Parliament will be very tight indeed.

Tim Luckhurst is a former editor of the Scotsman